

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4 and 6-28 are all the claims pending in the application. Applicants acknowledge that claims 13-24 have been withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

I. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 25-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishikawa (JP 2001-144430) in view of Watanabe (JP01-198094) and Shimizu (JP 2002-374062).

Claim 1, as amended, recites that an adhesive region and a non-adhesive region are provided on the first surface of the base member, the non-adhesive region being provided in the adhesive region, wherein the non-adhesive region is enclosed by a region, other than the non-adhesive region, of the adhesive region. Applicants respectfully submit that the above-noted prior art references do not disclose or suggest at least this feature of claim 1.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has taken the position that the Watanabe reference discloses a non-adhesive region that is provided within an adhesive region (see Office Action at page 3). In particular, Applicants note that the Examiner has taken the position that, in Fig. 1A of Watanabe, the region enclosed by the dotted line to which adhesive 6 is applied, corresponds to “an adhesive region”, and that the portions enclosed within the dotted line to which adhesive 6 is not applied, corresponds to “a non-adhesive region”.

As noted above, claim 1 has been amended herein so as to recite that the non-adhesive region is enclosed by a region, other than the non-adhesive region, of the adhesive region.

As is evident from the above-noted description of Watanabe, however, while Fig. 1A of Watanabe may arguably depict a non-adhesive region within an adhesive region, Applicants respectfully submit that Watanabe clearly does not disclose or suggest that the non-adhesive region is enclosed by a region, other than the non-adhesive region, of the adhesive region.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that Watanabe does not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious at least the above-noted feature recited in amended claim 1 of the non-adhesive region being provided in the adhesive region, wherein the non-adhesive region is enclosed by a region, other than the non-adhesive region, of the adhesive region. In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that the Ishikawa reference and the Shimizu reference do not cure the above-noted deficiency of Watanabe.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over the cited prior art, an indication of which is kindly requested.

Further, Applicants note that claim 1 also recites that the base member is provided with through holes penetrating through the non-adhesive region from the first surface of the base member to the second surface of the base member.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that the through holes 108 of Shimizu correspond to the above-noted “through holes” recited in claim 1 (see Office Action at page 3). Applicants respectfully disagree.

In particular, in Shimizu, while the through holes 108 are formed in a conveyance pallet 104, Applicants note that the adhesive 16 of Shimizu is plainly depicted as covering the

entire surface of the region 12 (see Fig. 1).

Thus, as the through holes 108 of Shimizu clearly penetrate through an adhesive region, Applicants respectfully submit that Shimizu does not disclose or suggest the above-noted feature of a base member being provided with through holes that penetrate through the non-adhesive region, as recited in claim 1.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Ishikawa nor Watanabe cure this deficiency of Shimizu.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art references do not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious the above-noted feature recited in claim 1 of the base member being provided with through holes penetrating through the non-adhesive region from the first surface of the base member to the second surface of the base member.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over the cited prior art, an indication of which is kindly requested. Claims 2, 4, 6-12 and 25-28 depend from claim 1 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Regarding non-elected claims 13-24, Applicants note that each of independent claims 13, 23 and 24 has been amended so as to include all of the features recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, as these claims include all of the features recited in claim 1, upon allowance of claim 1, Applicants submit that claims 13, 23 and 24 should be rejoined in accordance with MPEP § 821.04 and indicated as allowable, along with all claims that depend from claims 13, 23 and 24.

II. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Tatsuki NOGIWA et al.

By: Kenneth W. Fields
Kenneth W. Fields
Registration No. 52,430
Attorney for Applicants

KWF/jjv
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
July 19, 2007